



Department of History QIP Final Report

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Contents

Final Progress Report.....	1
Table 1: Review Process - Stages and Timeline	1
Table 2: Summary of Status of Recommendations	1
Table 3: Recommendations Completed	2
Table 4: Faculty/Institutional Level Recommendations	10

Final Progress Report

This report sets out the key actions that have been undertaken to deliver on the recommendations of the Department of History Quality Review. This final report maps the progress of the recommendations from the drafting of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in June 2021 to May 2024.

The quality review process consists of the following stages:

Stage	Process	Timeline
1	Initiation of the Quality Review	January 2020 Stalled March due to Covid
2	Development of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR)	SAR Completed March 2021
3	External Assessment and Virtual Review by the Peer Review Group	April 2021
4	Publication of a Peer Review Report including findings and recommendations	Sept 2021
5	Development of QIP	Sept 2021 ongoing
5	Adoption of a Quality Improvement Plan by Executive Team (ET)	Approved ET Jan 2023
6	Completion of the Quality Improvement Plan	May 2024

Total Number of Recommendations	24
Recommendations – Faculty/Institutional Level	10
Total Number of Actions arising from Recommendations	34 (70% complete)

In the following sections, recommendations that have been completed are shown in green (Table 3), and those at faculty/institutional level are shown in orange (Table 4).

Table 3: Recommendations Completed

Allocated To	Rec. No.	Recommendations	Recommendation (Specific)	Action Item	Action
Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	1.1	General: Connect the Department vision better to the College’s vision, especially around being grounded in the civic/local but linked to the global. Articulate the Department research strengths collectively too rather than just as the strengths of individual staff.	Specific: Set aside dedicated time at least once a semester to discuss vision and strategy especially around research and how it informs the curriculum and teaching. (The ‘Research Plan’ does not fulfil this recommendation because it’s a report not a plan).	1.1.1	1. The Department will set aside dedicated time at least once per semester, as suggested. This will provide an opportunity both to take up the specific action, but also to examine the more general point and to consider how best to articulate this internally and externally. Nov 2023: This has been amalgamated into the final department meeting of the year and the practice will continue for 2024–2025.
Dean of Arts Prof. William Leahy	1.2	General: Appoint Oral Historian to lead management and growth of the Oral History Collection.	Specific: Work with senior management to find the resource for this post.	1.2.1	This item has been combined with Action Items 3.3.1 & 6.4.1 Feb 2024: A new staff member with expertise in oral history has been appointed. This is a replacement post rather than a new post.
Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	2.1	General: More formal structures for assessing vision, policies, delivery.	Specific: Standing items in department meetings beyond housekeeping, teaching delivery, to include research, EDI, with staff assigned to report on specific items.	2.1.1	In respect of EDII, the History Department has aligned the QIP action with the AS Action Plan by undertaking Action 5.6.1 Communicate AS process, EDII training and Events at departmental level. EDII has been added as a standing item for department meetings. Research is dealt with under action item 1.1.

Faculty of Arts Office Manager Ms Rachel Godfrey	2.3	General: More formal collaboration between academic and professional staff.	Specific: 1. Act as conduit for professional staff to contribute to improve delivery of teaching and learning.	2.3.1	Map out a mechanism for greater interaction between department assistant and course coordinator to help with administration such as Moodle etc. Action: This has been actioned by the Arts Office Manager in tandem with Department Administrator.
Director of Quality Dr Deirdre Ryan	2.3	General: More formal collaboration between academic and professional staff.	Specific 2. Advocate for Faculty based professional development opportunities for professional staff.	2.3.2	DoQ discussed professional development opportunities for professional services staff with Faculty of Arts Office Manager. A new scheme has been advertised by HR (UCD Professional Development Co-Funding Training initiative) which delivers Professional Diplomas in a range of areas. These courses are paid for by MIC with a matched number of places being offered free of charge by UCD. This offers an opportunity for PS staff to engage in a Professional Diploma without the burden of paying fees upfront, which can be a barrier to undertaking such courses. Academic Year 2023-2024: A range of in-house professional development opportunities have been made available to staff. External professional development opportunities are also provided for staff through funding of accredited programmes.
Dept of History Dr Una Bromell	3.2	General: Explore possibility of an online MA.	Specific: Work with marketing and the energetic international office to establish feasibility and sustainability of online provision.	3.2.1	A fully online MA in History developed, approved by APAC and is currently being delivered.
Dean of Arts Prof. William Leahy	3.3	General: Maintain strength in Oral History.	Specific: Present case for appointment of a staff member in Oral History.	3.3.1	This Item has been combined with Action Items 1.2.1 & 6.4.1 Feb 2024: A new staff member with expertise in oral history has been appointed. This is a replacement post rather than a new post.

Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	3.4	General: Integrate medieval history strand to a greater extent into the BA.	Specific: Better marketing of medieval courses to students.	3.4.1	APAC approved a new BA medieval history module which integrates the medieval history strand to a greater extent into the BA. This provides choice and more visibility for medieval strand with BA students.
Director of Quality Dr Deirdre Ryan	3.5	General: Highlight employability beyond teaching.	Specific: Work with students and Faculty to identify skills and help students translate them into what employers seek e.g., specific sessions for students at each level, a Faculty-wide employability module.	3.5.1	<p>More emphasis is now placed on developing students' soft skills as outlined below:</p> <p>Year 1, BA foundational modules in Skills for Study and Work (1 & 2).</p> <p>Year 2, further broadening of students' skill base through elective modules.</p> <p>Year 3, development of specific skills through work, or travel, or studying abroad as part of the Off-Campus Programme.</p> <p>Year 4, Submission of undergraduate dissertation, demonstrating research skill and ability to work independently.</p>
Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	4.1	General: Module review process.	Specific: Establish an internal structure which examines and reflects upon good awards, mark moderation, student feedback, and external examiner comments with regard to module improvement. In collaboration with the Faculty, develop a consistent method of student feedback.	4.1.1	<p>1.The Department provide extensive feedback to students on assessments, using a department template.</p> <p>2. Annual review of awards, marks, feedback (including student and External Examiner feedback) is a standing agenda item on the first department meeting of the academic year.</p> <p>Mark moderation is not feasible without extra resources.</p>
Director of Quality Dr Deirdre Ryan	4.2	General: Student feedback to staff.	Specific: In order to close the feedback loop, communicate more effectively with students on how their feedback is actioned e.g., student representative forums, 'You	4.2.1	Participation levels for MISU Class Rep system remain challenging. Firstly, remote learning required during Covid and more recently the accommodation crisis has led to difficulties in recruiting Class Reps. This traditionally has been a conduit for student feedback at year level. At faculty

			said, we did' reports from previous student feedback.		level the staff-student forum provides students with an opportunity to give feedback and in turn hear how it has been actioned. Nov 2023: The HoD had a positive meeting with the current class reps and MISU VP in the Autumn Semester. It was agreed that they will continue to meet once per semester, these meetings are not formal (i.e. not minuted). The feedback loop is as follows: the HoD meets the student reps, reports to the next department meeting, and then resumes the conversation with the reps at next meeting with them.
Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	4.3	General: Grow international links.	Specific: Establish strategic links with international universities focused on the specific needs of history students and staff in order to strengthen student recruitment, enhance the MIC student experience, and explore research opportunities.	4.3.1	This point has been actioned. The Department are working with the International Office, specifically on the development of new Erasmus links.
Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	5.1	General: New Library.	Specific: Pending the re-development of the library, identify creative and cost-effective ways to expand history collection for students e.g., e-books, primary sources, especially State Papers considering early modern strength, use of UL library and City/County libraries, and possibly inter-library loans.	5.1.1	The Department already does much of this. To further support this recommendation the Department is participating in the Library User's Group.

Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	5.2	General: Build Student Community.	Specific: Develop department and faculty led student community efforts e.g., History society, quizzes, Historians at the Movies etc.	5.2.1 HoD to discuss with MISU PG Rep, Class Reps & Dept. of History PGs. This item can now be progressed as Class Reps for 2022/23 have been appointed. Action: HoD to arrange discussion involving department, research postgraduates and undergraduate class reps. Nov 23: HoD raised this again with the class reps that he met in the autumn and got a positive response. But it will take some time to progress. This will be an ongoing action.
Dean of Arts Prof. William Leahy	5.3	General: Academic/Guidance mentorship scheme.	Specific: Participate in Faculty review of current 1st year scheme with view to expanding beyond 1st year and driving engagement.	5.3.1 Academic Advisor System The Faculty of Arts Academic Advisor System continues to run with 1 st year BA students and is administered by the Faculty of Arts Office. There are no plans at present to rollout this system out beyond 1st year.

Dept of History Dr Brian Hughes	6.2	General: Develop a plan for communicating their collective research accomplishments in a more structured manner to ensure that those beyond the discipline (at Mary Immaculate and among external stakeholders, including potential funders) understand the scale of their achievement.	Specific #1: Collectively, this involves minor but important adjustments such as an enhancement of the Department’s research webpage so that it becomes a forum where their strengths and achievements are elucidated more clearly and fully.	6.2.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department has reviewed their personal webpages and overall department webpage in respect of communicating research accomplishments. 2. Dr Brian Hughes is coordinator for X (formally twitter) account. Department members provide Brian with details of recent publications/presentations (in tweet form) early in the term. Brian sends one item out a week/fortnight. 3. Postgraduate publications/presentations are also tweeted out. This increases the visibility of the Department’s research profile on social media and the MIC website.
Dept of History Dr Brian Hughes	6.2	General: Develop a plan for communicating their collective research accomplishments in a more structured manner to ensure that those beyond the discipline (at Mary Immaculate and among external stakeholders, including potential funders) understand the scale of their achievement.	Specific #2: If possible, linking the active Departmental twitter account to the webpage would create a rolling noticeboard of achievements.	6.2.2	Our advice is that it is not possible to link our X account to the Department webpage.
Director of Research Dr Richard Butler	6.2	General: Develop a plan for communicating their collective research accomplishments in a more structured manner to ensure that those beyond the discipline (at	Specific #3: At an individual level this involves more consistent engagement with external and internal mechanisms for promoting research.	6.2.3	Completed Action item (6.2.1) supports this. The Department actively engages with Strategic Communications and Marketing to promote the work of the History Department both internally and externally.

		Mary Immaculate and among external stakeholders, including potential funders) understand the scale of their achievement.			
Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	6.3	General: Enhanced structured attention at Departmental level for PGR students.	Specific #1: Achieving this will certainly involve collective planning and will likely involve the identification of a dedicated postgraduate research leader or point of contact in the Department.	6.3.1	Action: We will examine the possibility of creating a research postgraduate lead. Nov 2023: The Department have discussed this and decided that it is not feasible in a small department.
Director of Quality Dr Deirdre Ryan	6.3	General: Enhanced structured attention at Departmental level for PGR students.	Specific #2: A shared research-focused activity that is purposeful and for these students specifically, centred on the Department, as this would enhance their sense of being a history research community;	6.3.2	This will be addressed in conjunction with the research postgraduate students. Suggestion - one event per semester for PGRs to enhance sense of community. Seek input from PGRs in relation to what would work for them. Action: HoD discussed with research postgraduate students. Nov 2023: The Research Seminar together with informal meetings between staff and postgraduate students appear to be best suited for postgraduates to build a sense of community.
Dept of History Dr Brian Hughes	6.3	General: Enhanced structured attention at Departmental level for PGR students.	Specific #4: Enhancing the listing of current PhD students on the webpage by listing their areas of study;	6.3.4	Department to include 6.3 4 & 6.3 5 in the general update of the Department webpage Action: Website updated.
Dept of History Dr Brian Hughes	6.3	General: Enhanced structured attention at Departmental level for PGR students.	Specific #5: Listing recent graduates and providing testimonials from them on the webpage;	6.3.5	1. Department to include 6.3 #4 & #5 in the general update of the Department webpage Action: Website updated.

Head of Department Dr Liam Chambers	6.3	General: Enhanced structured attention at Departmental level for PGR students.	Specific #6: Consideration of whether the Departmental Assistantships can become structured launchpads to the achievement of external funding (e.g., IRC) as well as being an admirable end in themselves.	6.3.6	This is already the case. Note: Two Postgraduate History Students were recipients of 2022 IRC funding call. Five in total received by MIC PG students.
Dean of Arts Prof. William Leahy	6.4	General: Preservation of the Oral History collection.	Specific: Preservation and transformation into a high-quality useable research resource housed by, and identified with, MIC and second, as already identified, the teaching/research staff to ensure that the Department becomes the primary site where the value of the collection is liberated and so the Department is identified as a centre of excellence. This will involve co-operation, inventiveness, and the commitment of resources across at all levels, College, Faculty, Research and Graduate School Office and the Department of History.	6.4.1	<p>Discussion with Dean in first instance. The aim is to identify pathways for funding which will provide a mechanism to achieve the objectives of this recommendation.</p> <p>Action: This recommendation has been discussed with the Dean and mechanisms for funding are being explored.</p> <p>Nov 2023: The Department are in the middle of discussions about potential funding which would enable them to make significant progress with the collection.</p> <p>Feb 2024: A new staff member with expertise in oral history has been appointed. This is a replacement post rather than a new post</p> <p>April 2023: ET has approved the appointment of a Digital Archivist to work on the consolidation and cataloguing of the oral history collection on a six-month contract. This work should commence in August/September 2024.</p>

Table 4: Faculty/Institutional Level Recommendations					
Allocated To	Rec No.	Recommendations	Recommendation (Specific)	Action Item	Action
Vice-President Academic Affairs Prof. Niamh Hourigan	1.3	General: Recognise specific time in annual workload planning and beyond for research (to include planned sabbaticals).	Specific: Proactively work with senior management to devise and test appropriate Workload Model and Sabbatical scheme e.g., volunteer for pilot study, model how a 30 or 40% research allowance might affect the department's delivery of teaching.	1.3.1	Workloads Allocation Model. Development of the WAM is ongoing.
Director of EDII Prof. Lorraine McIlrath	1.4	General: More explicit acknowledgement and discussion of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion across everything the Department does.	Specific: Review curriculum and student support annually in terms of EDI. Work with Faculty specific development sessions on EDI in Higher Education e.g., unconscious bias training, efforts to decolonize curriculum.	1.4.1	This action item is linked to action item 3.1.1 in relation to the curriculum. In respect of Faculty specific development sessions on EDI in Higher Education e.g., unconscious bias training, efforts to decolonize curriculum, the QIP action will be linked to Item 5.3.6 of the FoA Athena Swan (AS) Action Plan which seeks to Increase uptake of EDII and UCB training in the Faculty as a whole to 75% minimum by 2023; 100% by 2025. The Faculty of Arts has appointed Dr Susan Liddy as EDII Lead.
Dean of Arts Prof. William Leahy	2.2	General: Collaborate with Faculty on common issues such as promotional pathways, a sabbatical rota, and shared roles such as directors of Postgraduate Research and/or	Specific: Expanded use and remit of Faculty wide meetings to achieve these results both at department and Faculty levels.	2.2.1	This is a whole of faculty issue and cannot be dealt with at department level.

		Research, as well as Teaching and Learning.			
Dean of Arts Prof. William Leahy	2.4	General: Career development mentors.	Specific: Establish a system of mentorship for all academic staff to develop careers in preparation for a new College-wide promotions pathway.	2.4.1	This is a whole of institution issue and cannot be dealt with at department level.
Director of EDII Prof. Lorraine McIlrath	3.1	General: Review of EDI in curriculum.	Specific: Embedding EDI across modules, both in terms of content and reading lists, in place of stand-alone topics.	3.1.1	<p>This is linked to action item 1.4.1. FoA AS Action item 5.6.3 <i>Conduct an EDII in curriculum review.</i> The History Department will contribute to this.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse the UG and PG curriculum, to assess how gender balanced it is and whether any changes could be made in light of the Faculty's AS goals and commitments. 2. Analyse the curriculum in terms of EDII. 3. Once the analysis is completed, consult with the Faculty to discuss how any gender imbalances that are uncovered in the curriculum could be redressed. 4. Submit a report to AFB, FMC and Teaching & Learning Directorate on findings and recommendations. <p>Action: The Faculty of Arts has appointed Dr Susan Liddy as EDII Lead.</p>
Director of Quality Dr Deirdre Ryan	4.1	General: Module review process.	In collaboration with the Faculty, develop a consistent method of student feedback.	4.1.3	<p>A newly developed Module Feedback Survey was rolled out in AY2021/22 Sem 2. The response rate for the newly developed MFS has been very low.</p> <p>A shortened version of the module satisfaction survey was run in Week 9-11 Spring Semester AY2023-24. The response rate was again low.</p>

					A decision is required at institutional level with regard to the efficacy of the module feedback survey.
Graduate School Director Dr Julianne Stack	4.4	General: Department Assistant (DA)/Tutor training.	Specific: 1. Develop key teaching and learning skills, including marking and moderation, for DAs/Tutors. 2. Produce a specific DA/Tutor handbook.	4.4.1	1. Teaching and Learning skills relating to specific history modules is provided by individual lecturers. DAs/tutors do not grade written work at present; they grade tutorial participation and individual staff provide guidelines on this. The development of generic teaching and learning skills are addressed by the RGS. At present there is no specific DA/Tutor Handbook.
Vice-President Research Prof. Michael Healy	6.1	General: More officially defined time for research. If the highly commendable levels of research activity are to be maintained, then staff require enhanced (that is defined and resourced) research time. The Department cannot alone address this issue, though some ameliorative measures may rest within their control.	Specific #1: Working with College and Faculty to achieve enhanced structured provision for sabbatical research leave; a defined allocation of research time within regular workloads; enhanced staffing.	6.1.1	Workloads Allocation Model. Development of the WAM is ongoing.
Vice President Academic Affairs Prof. Niamh Hourigan	6.1	General: More officially defined time for research. If the highly commendable levels of research activity are to be maintained, then staff	Specific #2: At departmental level, the purposeful investigation of measures to mitigate onerous teaching loads; such measures to include the reduction of teaching hours associated with a 6-credit	6.1.2	The Department has examined this issue, as part of ongoing discussion of potential programme / module changes. 6 credit modules require 36 hours, but this equates to 24 hours of lectures + 12 hours of tutorials. At

		require enhanced (that is defined and resourced) research time. The Department cannot alone address this issue, though some ameliorative measures may rest within their control.	module from 36 to 30 hours (reflecting sectoral norms), and the teaching of modules across programmes (BEd and BA).		present, we teach tutorials/seminars in 4BA only to mitigate in some part against the teaching load. Ultimately the solution may lie with the WAM.
Graduate School Director Dr Julianne Stack	6.3	General: Enhanced structured attention at Departmental level for PGR students.	Specific #3: The provision of a PhD Handbook which welcomes the students, provides essential information, articulates (from the beginning) the expected path of a History PhD student at MIC, directs them toward resources available to them at Departmental and Research and Graduate School Office, informs them of points of contact beyond their supervisor, and communicates to them what is expected from them;	6.3.3	At present all information is provided to PGRs at orientation but collation of same into a handbook is planned.